

**Jefferson-Madison-Silver  
Bow County FSA Office  
3 Whitetail Rd  
Whitehall, MT 59759**

**County Committee Members**

Cindy Ashcraft, Chair  
Marion Johns, Vice Chair  
Charlene Berryman, Member  
Janet Endecott, Member  
Heath Rieder, Member

**FSA Office Personnel**

Bonita Kober, CED  
Kathleen Ballard, PT  
Amanda Lucas, PT  
Terrie Casagrande, TF  
Alan Jenne, FLM

**Dates to Remember:**

**August 1** – Reconstitution  
Deadline for FY 2007

**August 1** – COC Nomination  
forms must be returned to county  
office by close of business

**August 3** – Signature deadline on  
2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical  
Program (DCP)

**August 4 - September 28** – DCP  
late filed fee of \$100 will be  
assessed

**August 8 & 9** – Office closed for  
**District 3 Meeting**

**September 3** – Holiday, Office  
closed

**September 24-27** – Tribal  
Outreach Forum, Gran Tree,  
Bozeman

**September 28** – Final date for late  
filed 2007 DCP contracts

**October 2 & 3** – Women Stepping  
Forward for Agriculture  
Symposium, Dillon

**November 2** – COC ballots will be  
mailed to eligible voters

**December 3** – Final date to return  
voted COC ballots to FSA office



# Jefferson-Madison-Silver Bow

## August 2007

### **DCP Signature Deadline is September 28, 2007**

Producers enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) have until September 28th to provide all contract signatures for share acres and late-filed fees.

**NOTE:** A number of questions have been received regarding the restoration of DCP base acreage from CRP contracts expiring on September 30, 2007. Currently, the 2002 Farm Bill provides for restoration of lost base acres when a CRP contract expires. That provision ends September 30, 2007 with the expiration of the 2002 Farm Bill. When a new Farm Bill is passed by Congress, FSA will provide details as they become available.

### **Fire Management on CRP**

With the hot, dry weather Montana faces during July and August, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holders have the opportunity to provide fire protection on their CRP acres.

Firebreaks can either be a strip of bare land or a vegetative cover that retards fire. Grazing is not allowed as an option to maintain firebreaks. Bare ground firebreaks shall be only allowed in high risk areas such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. Bare ground strips may serve as sites for the establishment of weeds. As required for the vegetative cover, weeds and erosion must be controlled on bare ground strips. Lack of weed control measure could result in noncompliance of CRP provisions and assessment of payment reduction or termination of the affected acreage. It is the responsibility of the CRP contract holder to maintain the firebreaks.

CRP contract holders must acquire a modification to their current CRP contract that includes fire management. Contact the office for required fire management specifications.

### **2007 County Committee Election Dates**

August 1	COC nomination forms must be returned to county office by close of business
November 2	Ballots mailed to eligible voters
December 3	Final date to return voted ballots to FSA office

### **No Final 2006 Counter-cyclical Payments for Wheat, Barley and Oats**

FSA will not issue final 2006-crop counter-cyclical payments to farmers enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) for wheat, barley and oats. The decision was made due to the fact that prices for these commodities have averaged well above levels that trigger counter-cyclical payments.

Counter-cyclical payments are made at the end of an eligible crop's 12-month marketing year. The 2002 Farm Bill provides for the availability of two partial counter-cyclical payments. USDA did not issue a first or second partial payment for the 2006 crop of wheat, barley or oats due to strong markets.

The counter-cyclical payment rate is the amount by which the "target price" of each commodity, specified by the 2002 Farm Bill, exceeds its effective price. The effective price equals the direct payment rate plus the higher of either: 1) the national average market price received by producers during the marketing year; or 2) the national average loan rate for the commodity.

For each commodity, the counter-cyclical payment for each crop year equals 85 percent of the farm's base acreage times the farm's counter-cyclical payment yield times the counter-cyclical payment rate.

### **2007 Tribal Outreach Forum**

The USDA State FAC in cooperation with the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), 1994 Land Grant Tribal Colleges and Universities, Tribal Governments and Tribal organizations from across Montana will host a Tribal Outreach Forum at the Gran Tree Inn, in Bozeman, MT September 24-27, 2007.

The conference registration fee is \$35 which will be waived for individual Tribal producers who attend. A limited amount of scholarship funds is available.

If interested in applying for a scholarship, a registration form or an agenda, contact the FSA office for further details.

### **Beginning, Small and Limited Resource Farmers: Do You Require Financial Assistance to Fund Conservation Program Initiatives?**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FSA have worked cooperatively to make USDA programs more available and readily accessible to beginning, small, and limited resource producers.

As many producers move from the initial contract development of especially the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), many face the inability to acquire the initial capital investment for their cost-share portion needed for contract implementation. Even with increased cost-share rates, the challenge of providing the up-front share may present problems to full contract implementation.

USDA provides some options. FSA has several loan programs available that may help with the upfront costs associated with program implementation. Use of FSA loan programs, in conjunction with conservation programs, has the potential to improve the effectiveness of both NRCS and FSA programs. FSA loans can be used for various farm purposes such as farm improvements, which would cover conservation projects and practices, and payment of costs associated with land and water development for conservation use purposes. Loan funds may be used to finance the producer's share of the project cost, and also as interim financing on the Federal cost-share portion paid upon completion of the conservation program project.

Contact the FSA or NRCS office for options available and further information on how FSA loans can assist with completing conservation projects.

#### **District Meeting – Office Closed**

The office will be closed August 8 & 9 so staff can attend a meeting for District 3.

## **Re-enrollment Opportunities for 2007 CRP Continuous Sign-up**

Producers and landowners may be eligible to re-enroll their land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous sign-up if their contracts expire on September 30, 2007.

Producers with general sign-up CRP contracts that expire September 30, 2007, who did not take advantage of the last year's re-enrollment or extension offer may also be eligible for the continuous sign-up.

Nationwide, more than 300,000 acres enrolled in continuous sign-up are scheduled to expire at the end of September. Of those 300,000, Montana has 1,096 contracts totaling 135,000 acres that will expire this September.

Please contact the office if you were not notified by mail of this possibility.

## **Reminder: Providing Copies to Insurance Companies**

Private insurance representatives are now required to provide the FSA county office a signed statement from the insured individual specifying the crop year and the related documents the producer wants copied for the insurance agent.

The insurance agent will then be charged for these documents at the rate of \$0.20 per page/side for copies of the Acreage Report (FSA-578) and \$1.00 per copy for map photo copies. If the statement by the producer is not provided and payment received, the documents will not be released to the insurance agent or representative.

## **Preventing Fraud & Waste**

FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA) are partners in preventing fraud, waste and abuse in the Federal Crop Insurance Program. FSA has been, and will continue to assist RMA and insurance providers by monitoring crop conditions throughout the growing season. In addition, FSA will refer all suspected cases of fraud, waste and abuse to RMA. Producers can also report suspected cases to FSA or RMA.

## **Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium**

The Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium will be held October 2 & 3, 2007 at the Beaverhead Golf Course, Highway 41 North in Dillon. Early registration is \$50 due by September 20. The Symposium is sponsored by the State FAC, MT Agri-Women, MT Farm Bureau Women, WIFE and the MT Cattlewomen. The symposium provides a platform for women involved in the promotion of Montana's agriculture to learn of issues affecting rural agricultural communities, promote leadership development, and further support women's leadership roles.

An agenda including the registration form is available at the FSA office or by logging into the Montana FSA homepage at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

## **New Features on the Web**

USDA provides their customers an opportunity to do business electronically 24 hours a day seven days a week over the Internet.

With a Level 2 access, USDA customers may receive their 1099-G form, review any collections or debts they may have with USDA and also review an itemized listing of their USDA payments.

Receiving a Level 2 account is a simple process. By entering your name, address and answering a few questions, customers may have access to the above mentioned items.

In addition to receiving payment information, USDA customers may also send forms from the comfort of their home and sign up for programs without visiting a USDA service Center.

Complete step-by-step instructions for obtaining a Level 2 access, retrieving payment information, submitting forms and signing up for certain programs is available by logging on to the Montana FSA Internet site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

**Jefferson-Madison-Silver Bow FSA Office**

3 Whitetail Rd  
Whitehall, MT 59759

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***Important Dates to Remember***

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**Expanding Emergency Haying and Grazing Eligibility Area**

CRP contract holders within a 210 mile radius of Glacier County may offer their CRP acreage to Glacier County livestock producers for haying or grazing purposes.

Livestock producers must certify they are a livestock producer in an eligible county approved for emergency haying and grazing and they are requesting emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage from a CRP contract holder within the expanded area willing to lease the haying or grazing rights.

For all land enrolled in CRP that has been approved for emergency haying and grazing, a payment reduction shall be assessed based on the number of acres actually hayed or grazed times the CRP annual rental rate times 10 percent.

CRP participants who are willing to lease the haying or grazing privilege to a livestock producer located in a county approved for emergency haying or grazing on CRP acreage should contact the local FSA office.

**Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact Bonita Kober at 3 Whitetail Rd, Whitehall, MT 59759, Ph: 406-287-3262, or email [bonita.kober@mt.usda.gov](mailto:bonita.kober@mt.usda.gov)**